

REMARKS

The present Amendment/Request For Reconsideration is submitted in response to the final Office Action dated August 13, 2009. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

In the final Office Action, claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 USC §102(b) over US Patent No. 6,347,218 to Fuhrmann (Fuhrmann).

The Examiner asserts that Fuhrmann discloses a discussion unit 10 for use in a conference system, wherein the discussion unit 10 is adapted to be connected to at least one second discussion unit 10, and wherein the discussion unit 10 comprises an essentially closed casing (410) and at least one exchangeable portion (420) is configured as at least one closed rim (422) that is removably mounted to the closed casing (410) **[abstract; fig. 1 and fig. 3; col. 3; lines 24-50; and col. 4, lines 15-21]**.

Applicants respectfully disagree.

Fuhrmann discloses an electronic device (i.e., mobile phone) with a housing 1 with which a plate shaped base element 2 and a shell-shaped housing element 3 are associated. Base element 2 and housing element 3 are connected by screws. Shell-shaped housing element 3 has a housing wall 5 and integrally connected to side walls 6. Housing wall 5 is configured with openings 7 to accommodate control elements 8 which extend up and out for user access, and display elements 9, 10. A cover or external wall element 14 at least partially covers the housing wall 5.

Fuhrmann does not disclose a discussion unit for use in a conference system, wherein the discussion unit is adapted to be connected to at least one second discussion unit, as claimed.

In the "Response to Arguments" at page 4, par. 4, the Examiner asserts that Fuhrmann teaches an electronic device (e.g., telephone), and that applicants' discussion unit is an electronic device. Applicants do not disagree. Applicants, however, cannot agree that Fuhrmann's electronic device (e.g., telephone) is a discussion unit for use in a conference system and adapted to be connected to at least one second discussion unit, as claimed.

Applicants' specification at lines 20-31 defines the phrases "discussion unit" and "conference system" as used in the claims. In more detail, the Specification at page 1, lines 20-24 states:

In the following, the expression "discussion unit" is used as a generic expression with respect to a unit to be used by a conference delegate or a unit to be used by a chairman ("chairman unit"). A system comprising at least two discussion units is referred to as a "conference system". Nevertheless, besides the discussion units, the conference system may comprise other components.

The Specification at page 1, lines 26-31 states:

Conference Systems are used to facilitate discussions between participants of conferences or meetings. The conference systems typically are installed (permanently or non-permanently) in the conference rooms for private or public use. These conference systems typically are adapted to allow for a speaker to give a speech using a microphone and for a chairman of the conference to control the speech, such as by switching on or off the speaker's microphone.

Hence, Fuhrmann's cordless telephone, mobile phone, wire-connected telephone, whether used in TV sets, radio receivers, CD players, cassette recorders, etc., are not equivalent to a discussion unit as claimed because none

of the Fuhrmann electronic devices is intended to be used by a conference delegate or conference chairman as part of a "conference system" comprising at least two discussion units in order to facilitate discussions between participants of conferences or meetings.

Moreover, while the Examiner further asserts in the "Response To Arguments" at page 5, par. 5, that Fuhrmann's discloses a closed casing and an external wall element 14 that at least partially covers housing wall 5, and that the external wall element 14 further comprises a closed rim 6, therefore meeting the claim limitations, applicants again disagree.

That is, while Fuhrmann's external wall element 14 covers side walls 6, 6' of housing element 3, applicants are not able to identify a closed casing or closed rim removably mounted to a closed casing in either Fuhrmann's Abstract or Fig. 1. Fuhrmann's wall element 14 is not equivalent to a closed casing, as claimed.

Fuhrmann at col. 3, lines 28-49, states that shell-shaped wall element 14 is designed to fit on shell-shaped housing element 3 on part of plate-shaped base element 2, covering side walls 6, 6' of housing element 3, and that side walls 6, 6' are supported at their lower edge on base plate 2.

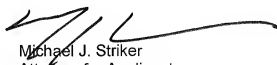
Side walls 6, 6', therefore, are not equivalent to an exchangeable portion configured as a closed rim, still less are side walls 6, 6' configured to be removably mounted to the closed casing. Fuhrmann therefore does not disclose an exchangeable portion configured as a closed rim, still less such an exchangeable portion/closed rim that is removably mounted to a closed casing.

In view of the fact that Fuhrmann fails to disclose these features of the invention, Fuhrmann does not anticipate independent claim 1. Nor is Fuhrmann a proper reference under 35 USC §102 pursuant to the guidelines set forth in the last paragraph of MPEP §2131. It is stated therein that “a claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claims is not found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference,” and that “the identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the ... claim.”

Claim 1 is therefore patentable under 35 USC §102(b) over Fuhrmann. Claims 2 and 4-11, which depend from claim 1, are patentable for at least the same reasons. Applicants according request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2 and 4-11 under 35 USC §102(b) over Fuhrmann.

Accordingly, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Action to this end is courteously solicited. However, should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, the undersigned would very much welcome a telephone call in order to discuss appropriate claim language that will place the application in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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